

Message Text

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73

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-11

/064 W

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R 040958Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO AMEMBASSY LOME

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3163

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LAGOS 1406

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, BPOR, DM, TO

SUBJECT: CLOSING OF TOGO/BENIN BORDER

REF: LOME 217

1. CHARGE OF AUSTRIAN EMBASSY LAGOS DROVE TO ACCRA TWO WEEKS AGO TO ARRANGE TRANSPORTATION FOR HHE STRANDED IN TEMA WHEN AFRICAN CONTAINER LINES WENT BANKRUPT. UNABLE TO ARRANGE HHE TRANSFER, HE ATTEMPTED TO RETURN TO LAGOS BY CAR AND JAN. 29 FOUND TOGO/BENIN BORDER CLOSED. APPEALS TO PERMIT TRANSIT OF BORDER AS FOREIGN DIPLOMAT, WHICH HE MADE IN LOME ALL THE WAY UP TO CHIEF OF PROTOCOL AND MINISTERIAL LEVEL, WERE OF NO AVAIL.

2. HAVING OVERSTAYED HIS GHANAIAVISA AND NEARLY OUT OF MONEY, AUSTRIAN THEN DECIDED TO ATTEMPT DETOUR TO NORTH ON PREMISE THAT ISOLATED OUTPOSTS MIGHT NOT YET HAVE RECEIVED WORD TO CLOSE BORDER. FROM LOME, AUSTRIAN CHARGE MOTORED TO LAMA KARA. THERE HE FOUND WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS VERY LARGE HOTEL IN WHICH HE WAS ONLY GUEST. HOTEL, APPARENTLY CONSTRUCTED THERE
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BECAUSE TOGOLESE PRESIDENT COMES FROM LAMA KARA, WAS STAFFED BY

SEVERAL GERMANS WHO WERE SO HAPPY TO SEE ANOTHER GERMAN SPEAKING EUROPEAN THAT THEY ADVANCED HIM 20,000 FRANCS AND A COOLER CHEST FULL OF WATER AND BEER.

3. CHARGE DROVE TO CHECKPOINT ON ROAD WHICH CROSSES AT PAGOUDA ON WAY TO DJOUGOU IN PROB. TOGOLESE GUARDS MERELY WAVED HIM ON, AND BENINOIS GUARDS SEEMED SO IMPRESSED AT SIGHT OF HIS MERCEDES WITH FLAG FLYING THAT THEY FORGOT TO STAMP HIS PASSPORT. TRIP DOWN TO COTONOU WAS PLEASANT AND UNEVENTFUL. BLANK PASSPORT CAUSED A LITTLE DIFFICULTY IN EXPLAINING TO PRB GUARDS AT NIGERIAN BORDER HOW HE HAD MANAGED TO GET INTO PRB, BUT HE WAS ALLOWED TO PASS WITHOUT MUCH ADO.

4. HOTEL STAFF AT LAMA KARA TOLD CHARGE THAT IT WAS INADVISABLE TO ATTEMPT CROSSING INTO PROB FROM UPPER VOLTA AT MOMENT SINCE BRIDGE OVER RIVER AT BORDER ON ROAD DOWN FROM FADA N'GOURMA WAS WASHED OUT.
EASUM

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